

**Propelled reflection of self: An arduous journey of a stalwart mother in  
Josh Malerman's *Bird Box***

**P.Yuvarani**

II.M.A. English Literature  
Dr. N.G.P Arts and Science College  
Coimbatore

**Dr. R. Vithya Prabha**

Professor and Head Department of English  
Dr. N.G.P Arts and Science College  
Coimbatore

**Abstract**

Josh Malerman's *Bird Box* depicts the gothic survival of a children and a mother in apocalyptic circumstances. The article enunciates the real impeccability of motherhood, it is a role or a great institution that defines what women are and it defines the status of women in the society. In western countries like America they have a mindset like men is a warrior where women is worrier, *Bird Box* breaks the stereotypical mindset among people during apocalyptic circumstances particularly. The unexpected event introduced in the novel 'blindfold' with that a mother struggled and become a worrier to save her kids in voyage of forty eight hours. The novel subtly portrays the humanity and adaptability. On the whole humanity and survival plays a major role. In apocalyptic word those who are intelligent is not a winner but those who are able to adapt as Malorie.

**Keywords:** Apocalyptic, Blindfold, Gothic, Motherhood, Survival

Josh Malerman's *Bird Box* is an apocalyptic novel where gothic, survival, horror, hope, death and the will power of a motherhood is been projected as a significant themes. In this novel Malerman plays a role with sense organs, where he minimizes the importance of eye sight and gave magnitude to earring sensation and proved intensive training can win everything in this world. Here the protagonist Malorie puts an effect to strengthen the will to mound her children. At any cost she is ready to save her children so she boldly takes a twenty miles (forty eight hours) voyage in a row boat by blindfolding. Her motherhood determines to persue her voyage.

Motherhood is the perfect flawless form of human behavior and the quintessence is felt differently by different mothers each feeling must be treated and respected equally. Giving birth alone is not attaining motherhood, women give birth and they shower their kids with love and affection and they bring up in a profound way but on the other hand some women give birth and they abounded their child for some reason they cannot be a true mother and accomplish true motherhood. Any number of motherhood demands a best version of a women and no mother feels fear to change for it.

Motherhood is a painful pleasure with lots of problems and mood swings as postpartum and prepartum they usually cherish and at the same time no mother thinks it's a painful thing. It is like a candle they burn themselves in order to give spark to their kids. The same elixir of motherliness is brought by the author Josh Malerman in *Bird Box* too.

Josh Malerman is an American novelist, short story writer, essayist, singer/song writer he is born in Southfield, Michigan, United States of America on 24 July ,1975. He heads the folk band named as The High Strung. He usually writes about horror fictions themes and Malerman is compared to Stephen king who is the King of horror novels. He is

awarded Bram Stoker Awards (2015) Michigan Awards (2015) Shirley Jackson Awards (2016) he gives important to horror fiction themes. *Bird Box* receives dual Award such as Bram Stoker Award and Michigan Award. Novel is completely based on the hope of a mother to reach a safe place for her children.

The drastic transition from adulthood to motherhood is vigorous, because a woman must change her adult's physical, mental, social state of mind to meet her motherhood's criteria such as physical, mental and social well being for the sake of her family and mainly to her children. While adapting to the situation fear and worry are the main point where they become incompetent to accept their responsibility. The exact portrayal brings in Malorie life too but it was the highest of fearfulness, Malori's painting is seen as a representation of her anxious state stemming from loneliness and inability to connect with her child, at the same time the author put forth the boldness of the single mother under nomadic conditions.

Malerman tries bringing out the difficulties of a single mother where this kind of tradition is incredibly increasing. Josh Malerman tries to keep up with the real world's current situation, as far as single mother is concerned there as the primary care responsibilities is handled by a mother. The child grown up with the single parent and they are psychologically different but in this novel Malerman includes single parent struggle with the bare ability to survive with her kids. The main feature of adulthood is to make decision, Malerman also gives importance for decision making in *Bird Box*, where an adolescent mother Malorie decided to start a voyage, as time and tide wait for none so already it is been four long years have passed through and it could become another four years then children will be adult who has never seen a little happiness in their lives. "Malorie knows that four years can easily

become eight. Eight will quickly become twelve (3).” Throughout the novel the hope and decision of a mother leads their life for a better future

Even though Malorie has a strong decision making she suffered a lot during her family way, as a justification of this. The famous quote by anonyms author comments:

The stress of a mother is like no other. During times of stress, she may struggle to find her way because she’s facing her own personal demons, but her child’s welfare comes first. She is not perfect and makes a lot of mistakes but never doubt her love it deeply burns her heart. (lessons taught by life)

Malorie too falls in a same line like she used to feel panic about her pregnancy in the high modern upgraded technological world itself, at present her feeling goes worst that no doctors among the strangers in addition to that she imagines of her pending motherhood in ‘realm of horror’ but when it comes to her children she overcome all her personal demons, with all her boldness she delivered her child and assisted her roommate Olympia’s labor too. Every woman could connect pain with the words of Malorie “There will be no doctor. No nurse.

*No medicine”* (210).

Motherhood is the painful pleasure its common among all the women , this article is evident that before rising a child a mother must be raised first so Malorie also started to see the reality keenly, accepts and states:

One day, the pain your mother and the pain every mother speaks of will come to you in the same form: childbirth. Only a woman can experience it and because of this all women are bonded. (209)

Every woman accepts the reality soon and console themselves finally a will power of a women could see, in the end the delivery will be the fact it is not a matter if it happens in a hospital or in a kitchen floor. The mothers' body knows what to do. And it will do what to do. Already she is in difficult situation both mentally and physically with this coming out and consoling herself is a very great deal.

Sentimentalism is alright, but it is nowhere near a great challenges same as such Malorie thinks, in order to safe her two children from the creature she went to the extend and decide to make her two children blind "know the danger the substance posed if it made contact with the eyes . A person could go blind, it said, if they didn't wash it out in thirty seconds". (163) but the purity of the mother stops her from doing the sheer inhuman act.

Sentimentalism is different from humanity, where sentimentalism could be an option but humanity is a choice, the situation could be worst or it could go worst anytime the only thing comes from people is humanity as an evident to this is when people go mad everyone started to shut their doors and windows stay behind but George is the one who acts as an epitome of humanity. He only started to accompany and allow strangers into his house, tried many experiments and many theories, unfortunately the same theory made him to meet his end. As a role model for humanity all other strangers get into the house with the test including Malorie and Olympia here. After George the position is succeeded by Malorie it would be connected to the motherhood. "The beauty of motherhood is not in reproduction. The beauty of motherhood is in inclusion" (sadhguru) as a justification of this, Malorie adopted the child of Olympia and guarded him till the end she did not show any difference between her child and Olympia's child. In the time of restrained survival (voyage) too.

Life has always made to be possible, so on the note of survival Malorie felt dead bad pain in her shoulders because she has to row the boat continuously for forty eight hours with the great challenging of blind folded. At the same time she has to be guiding and noticing her children that they are also blindfolded. Information is power so she threatened them to feel all the changes happening around her and by this strict act, she constantly asks herself “ Are you a good mother?”(96). this question is felt in most of the places for example once she decided to go for a voyage “Malorie hands her a blindfold and says, ‘put this on. We’re going on the river” (7). The response of the children made her to feel bad cause children must be curious enough to ask questions and this attitude keeps the childhood alive. But she regrets that she killed their childhood days from them “It breaks Malorie heart. They are only children and should be curious .They should be asked her why, today, they are going on the river – a river they have never been on before” (7) it totally shows the psychology level of the children who has always trained to act according to the words of Malorie and somewhere lacks in thinking. But when it comes to mother Malorie, nobody hides pain better than a mother who’s trying to remain strong for her kids at crucial movement, in between the children’s uncanny maturity

Malorie was very strong she has not shown pain to her children but it was so exact and detail in her mind. She is not crying but she felt silent tears behind blindfold. Every Mother used to consoles herself and accepts the pain for her child as Malorie does. Whenever pain strikes her, she thought of reaching a better place for her children it feel boon for her when Rick called and informed about Jane Tucker School, the forty eight hours of voyage is to reach the school. After the attack of the birds and so called deer her mind is despair.

She wants to find a hospital. Run through the streets, screaming, I need a doctor, I need a doctor, I NEED A DOCTOR OR I'M GOING TO DIE AND THE CHILDREN WILL DIE WITHOUT ME!! (191)

In the death pain also she thought only about her children this is an evident for motherhood, even though Malorie had a strong hope she is also uncertain about the voyage because each and every second there could be a problem which push Malorie and her kids to death. Women are always destined for overcoming their struggles, here Malorie alone is not an exceptional she also reaches Jane tucker school with excruciation survival

After travelling painful forty eight hours in a river and struggling to survive without seeing monster for past five years she reaches Jane tucker school by remembering the guidance of Rick via telephone long years ago. Malorie and her children are allowed inside the school. The movement it was beautiful ethereal minute for them and after reaching she named her children, only after four years of birth the children got their identity as Olympia and the boy as Tom her survival partner it was an epiphany movement for the kids.

Malorie felt plethora of emotions after five long horrible years she endured the exact meaning of the word 'relief' and 'safety' and thinks the strange house and voyage as a mythical thing somewhere lost in infinity. To wrap up this novel is completely the bare survival of Malorie and her kids in the survival her motherhood gives enormous strength mainly her pain and suffering is seen majorly at the end they reached a safer place, inspite of her forty eight hours of dreadful voyage in the river . In Bertolt Brecht's play *Mother Courage* the character Mother Courage suffers to save her children from the war as like that Malorie suffers to safe her children from unknown invisible creature. As like the famous character of *Glass Menagerie* Laura struggle with the crippled leg here Malorie is also

crippled with her situation during her doctor less pregnancy finally both the character came out boldly from their situation. Women must be strong enough like Malorie and tackle all the problems in their life and succeed.

By the lime light of the article, one can sense the transformation of women from worrier to warrior. Every mother like Malorie must be brave and bold enough to face the situation and act against the problem.

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